



### Life Course

Childhood Risk Factor

### Brief Name

ACE: Divorce

### Indicator

Percent of children who have divorced or separated parents.

### Description

This is a proxy measure for toxic stress and is included as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). This asks parents, *"Did [child's name] ever live with a parent or guardian who got divorced or separated after [child's name] was born?"*

WI	US	Best	Worst
19.8%	20.1%	15.2%	29.5%
		DC	OK

### Year

2011/2012

### Numerator

Number of children who experienced the ACE

### Denominator

Children aged 0-17

### Importance

Divorce is correlated with decreased school achievement, poor behavior, decreased self-confidence, and more distant relationships with both parents. Research suggests that these outcomes are in response to stresses related to single-parenthood, or absence of a consistent second parent; economic disadvantage; or family conflict and instability (Amato, 1991).

### Limitations

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) does not include never-married parents as an ACE.

### Source

NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from [www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org). Amato, Paul R., and Bruce Keith. "Parental divorce and the wellbeing of children: a meta-analysis." *Psychological Bulletin*, 110.1 (1991): 26.